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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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Does Kennedy Hesitate Too Much?

By Drew Pearson

Two inside Administration debates have punctuated Eleanor Roosevelt's one-time statement: "I wish Mr. Kennedy had less profile and more courage."

Mrs. Roosevelt's remark referred to JFK's book "Profiles in Courage" and his failure to speak out on Pearson

Joe McCarthy, but it has been echoed by some of his own friends regarding two important decisions today:

1. Courageous action to prevent the march of Latin American dictators.

2. The sale of wheat to Communist nations.

In regard to both, the President has hesitated, delayed and looked to Congress for leadership.

Here is the inside story:

The march of the dictators probably dates back to Mr. Kennedy's extension of a \$100 million credit to the Argentine military after they had kicked out the civilian president. The U.S. Ambassador had warned that the credit would be withdrawn if civilian rule was toppled, but Mr. Kennedy went ahead with the credit anyway.

If this did not start the march of dictators, certainly JFK's sly wink at the Peruvian military a short time later did. For after U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and

bassador James Loeb had argued himself blue in the face warning the Peruvian military they must respect the Peruvian elections, and after the military had battered down President Prado's gates with Sherman tanks anyway, Mr. Kennedy proceeded to cut the ground right out from under his Ambassador.

He removed Loeb because the Peruvian military didn't like him, and kept him dangling without a job for one year.

Two Foreign Policies

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Rusk and Assistant Secretary Ed Martin had advised against recognition of the new Peruvian regime. While they were advising this policy, however, the wise Peruvian Ambassador in Washington, Fernando Berckemeyer, advised his government to the contrary. He got his information from JFK's close friend Charley Bartlett.

What this meant was that there are two sets of foreign policy in the Kennedy Administration. There is that recommended by the State Department, and that put into effect regardless of the State Department, by the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. military.

Up until last week, when the President recalled CIA Chief John H. Richardson from Saigon because he had been undercutting Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and

when he instructed Major Gen. Theodore Bogart to back up American Ambassador to Honduras Charles R. Burrows, JFK appeared to be listening more to the military and the CIA than to his diplomats. As a result, what the U.S. Ambassador says has meant almost nothing and the march of dictators has continued.

Vacillation on Wheat

Regarding the sale of wheat to Communist-bloc countries, the President also had definite advice from the State Department. Secretary Rusk and his East European experts all advised that the sale of wheat and flour to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary and to the Soviet should be OK'd.

It would help the drain on the dollar and start profitable trade with these countries, the State Department recommended.

This was seconded by three Cabinet officers chiefly concerned, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman and Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges and Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon.

Only one Cabinet member was doubtful—Secretary of HEW Anthony Celebrezze who warned that big-city populations would be opposed. He had in mind Hungarians, Polish-Americans and Italo-Americans. Celebrezze was one-time mayor of Cleveland, biggest Hungarian city in the United States.

This gave JFK, who always

worries about votes, some pause. He also worries about Republican leaders in Congress. So he instructed his Cabinet members to hold a series of hearings with Congress to try to win its approval. This was done. Congress did not oppose; however, GOP leaders indicated they would not pass a resolution of approval. They were neutral.

So JFK continued to hesitate until his announcement yesterday. If Harry Truman had waited for Congress to OK his aid to Greece and Turkey before going ahead with it, those two countries would be Communist today.

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